The Unitarian Calendar

"Like one whose doubts
Are chased by certainty, and terror turned
To comfort on discovery of the truth,
Such was the change in me: and as my guide
Beheld me fearless, up along the cliff
He mov'd, and I behind him, towards the height."

DANTE

Vol. 3 SEPTEMBER — 1910 No. 1

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Local offices at 104 East 20th Street, New York City; 175 Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill., and Cor. Franklin and Geary Streets San Francisco, Cal.

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Founded in 1825.

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The Unitarian Calendar

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THE UNIVERSAL TENDENCY

BY RICHARD W. BOYNTON

It appears to me of deep significance that, all the world over, progressive minds are advancing to positions that we had already worked out as our own, though in no exclusive sense. It is full of meaning that liberal men, of whatever church connection, as soon as their liberalism has become bold enough to step over the barriers of Broad Church ambiguity and compromise, are hailed from every side as Unitarian. It is a new thing in the world for a movement to proceed out of the very soil of Christendom that can stretch one of its branches across the sea to India, and plant a self-sustaining root of itself in Japan, and yet with no sacrifice of conviction on the one side or the other side. The name of Christian was first given as a reproach, until those who bore it made it a glory. So, if we are true, our name may become a glory—how great is not for us to tell. It carries no stain of persecution, of religious warfare, of fraternal bloodshed. It can no longer be tied down to connote only a hard and fast theory of the Godhead. Already it far transcends that meaning, and signifies Unity—the unity of law, the unity of mankind, the unity of God as the fulness of all in all. It only awaits for our little stream or eddy to feel the lifting of the great flood of human fellowship that is fast rising in the world, to be borne out into the central current and on to vaster issues than our eyes

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have yet beheld. Let us fare on, then, bravely, modestly, and humanely, and the far future may read in what we do a largeness of which we little dream.

MODERN RELIGION

BY F. M. BENNETT

The religion of modern life comes not to destroy but to fulfil; to include, not to exclude. It comes to add to the sum of religious experience, to take in more of life than heretofore has been claimed for religion. It comes to expect constant growth rather than occasional interference of the divine in the realm of life, to bring education instead of revivalism, to add modern knowledge to ancient belief, to give positive and true teaching in the place of the old negative doctrines which have gone, to hold religion valuable for what it may do in the present world instead of for what it may save us from in another, to conserve all that is of worth in the religious experience of the race and to add to it all that may be worthy from the present and future.

Modern religion is a religion of fulfilment, but it will not fulfil itself. That is the function of those who are possessed of it. The truly free soul must react upon life if he would know the value of his freeodm. The practical work of this modern religion is of greatest importance. He who holds this larger view ought to be worthy of it. If he has put his hand to the plow, he may not safely look backward. It is easy to analyze and criticise the old, but to do something in a grand way for the larger thought is of more significance. There is no religious growth without personal action and responsibility. The only way

to gain and keep the prize is to pay the price. Those who hold the nobler religion of modern life must live up to its requirements.

ONCE-BORN MEN

BY REV. S. C. BEANE, JR.

Evangelical literature has much to say concerning "twice-born men." Even in the more liberal parts of the land, revivals which tell of a race lost through Adam's sin, with a chance of redemption through the blood-atonement of Jesus Christ, are frequent. And in the more enlightened places of Orthodoxy, where the old theology has been stripped of its more barbarous features,—there also a second-birth is emphasized as most essential. Is not the time at hand to proclaim boldly and from the house-tops the truth that we are *born* the children of the living God? To understand that some, like Paul, must experience a sudden conversion or a second birth, but that there is something better, even, than that? Yes, some who have sinned greatly must be forgiven till the seventy times seven have been recorded, but the great, the perfect, the divine example can be found in Him who grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor both with God and man. In Him who was interested in religion as a young lad in the temple, and even before that time, all through His life, until on that last eventful day He could exclaim: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Let us follow in His steps!

THE INDWELLING GOD

BY WILLIAM S. NICHOLS

The highest, most practical thought of our religion, the thought which will do most for us in every particular, is the thought that God is a spirit within us. For long, dark ages people had struggled with the idea of an external, monstrous God. This was an awful thought, and our wonder must be that with such a thought, the race of man ever escaped a self-imposed bondage and ever succeeded in lifting itself at all toward the dignity of self-control and personal ambition. Our lot is far, far easier; our way is in comparison a golden path, wherein we should walk with a firm and eager stride. Our God is not external and afar off. Our God has not any power of wrath, and avenging hate, and destructive force. Our God is the love resident in our hearts. Our God is the spirit of goodness, and cheer, and success, the spirit of eternal life which by perfect systems of law, of cause and effect, of sequence and consequence, is working out with us the eternal destinies. We are perpetually in league with Him. He needs us in his undertakings. Here is the great new thought of the new religion. We cannot separate ourselves from the Infinite Spirit of life and feel that the Infinite work will go on without us. Does the Spirit of Life provide for the lovely flowers and the sweet-throated birds? The creation is not complete and cannot be complete until man, of high instincts and fine appreciation, has been provided, who will rejoice at the sight of the flowers and thrill at the music of the birds.

"It is only the last and wildest kind of courage that can stand on a tower before ten thousand people and tell them that twice two are four."

THE CHALLENGE OF THE TIMES

BY EDWARD G. SPENCER

It is true, as we are often reminded, that "we Unitarians have a beautiful gospel," but it does not of itself impress me as a truth of special importance. What is the beautiful gospel good for, other than to be talked about? What can be done with it to make life richer, sweeter, more fruitful, more worth the living to the great rank and file of mankind? Shall we be content merely to talk beautifully about the Divine Humanity, the Brotherhood of man, the eternal onward and upward Progress of mankind, or shall we, by means of the fire of sincere and earnest purpose, transmute the Beauty of our gospel into Power?

We know that Human nature is Divine. May we then stand idly and innocently by while men insult this Incarnate Divinity by burying the essential and eternal Fact beneath factitious temporal distinctions?

We declare that men are brethren. Shall we be silent, then, while the misfortunes of some are greedily exploited to the advantage of others?

We anticipate the unfailing progress of our kind. Shall we not, therefore, wage ceaseless war against the social falsehoods which repress and hamper and degrade?

How shall the beauty of our gospel render its meed of service until it has so incarnated itself in us that its virtue streams from us to refresh and to revivify the life of the great, over-burdened human world, espousing its wrongs, its sorrows and its causes, and fighting for truth and justice and brotherhood in its name?

These questions are becoming daily more insistent, and by this test the churches, young and old, orthodox and heterodox, are being tried. If we can do for men what no other church can or will do for them, we shall win them. If we can-

not, they will despise us the more that our vision is so clear, our gospel so beautiful, our opportunity so splendid, and our effort so half-hearted and barren of result.

THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

BY H. C. PARKER

There are no conditions anywhere to-day worse than those which the forces of righteousness have met and overcome in the past. And it would be a serious confession of moral weakness, of spiritual impotency, of intellectual dullness, to confess ourselves baffled and disheartened before the problems of our time. The evil which we deplore is here as a challenge to our religion, our faith in God and man, to our moral and spiritual efficiency, and we are not worthy of our inheritance as Christian men and women if we do not use our powers as those who are determined to be winners instead of losers in life's battle. It would be a new thing in the history of humanity if such effort should prove fruitless.

The supreme need of the day is not that we should run after this fad or that to show how free and independent we are, but that we should be true to the diviner instincts and aspirations of our nature and confront the opposing forces, not with criticisms and denunciations alone, but with our spiritual and ethical ideals and make them as far as we can the dominant forces in life. In this way we may raise our own lives and be the companions of those who advance the kingdom of God on earth.

We know that we are free to think, free to speak, and free to act. It is for us to use that freedom, not as an occasion of selfish indulgence and escape from the multitudes, but as an occa-

sion of service and uplift to all who can be profited by our word or deed. It is for us not to run with the multitude when the mutitude are going the wrong way, but to lift up our standard and show what we believe to be the way of righteousness and the path of more abundant life. It may not be a misfortune for a man to lose his individuality if he lose it in the way of service, for he who thus loses his life finds it, finds it in larger interests, hopes and sympathies.

THE LIVING CHURCH

BY AUGUSTUS M. LORD

This is what our church should do for us. It should keep each of us alive to himself, and it should keep us alive to each other. When our relationship here is no longer vital, but merely formal; when there is no sense of stimulating discovery; when we cease to make each other grow; when I cannot make your life, your soul, of more value to you, and you cannot make my life and my soul of more value to me,—then, as far as you and I are concerned, ours is no longer a church of the living God.

"New births are in his grace!"

Let us take this thought with us into the work of the coming year. It is not enough that we shall be as we have been; that we shall rest content with what we know of each other, and have done and been toward each other. We are to expect still richer treasure; we are to know more of each other, we are to be more to each other. In this place made priceless to many spirits by the treasure which each has here discovered for himself, we are to enter into more of the joys of that new life which is hidden, not from us, but for us.

A CHURCH AUTOMOBILE LEAGUE

BY REV. W. F. SKERRYE

Why not a Church Automobile League, every member of which shall agree to take out, not less than once a week, some needy, friendless, forsaken souls, for a few hours of the happier, healthier, sunnier life of which they see so little and of which many of us possess so much? The blessed air and sunlight, the fragrant fields and woods, that some of us accept and enjoy as matters of course, are luxuries beyond the reach of thousands. They are chained to toil, blinded and deafened with care, imprisoned by poverty, sickness or discouragement. The unhappy condition of such forms one of our oldest problems. How to meet and solve it is one of our most pressing questions. I venture to suggest one more way of approach.

If experience has proved anything in this respect, it is that human beings in distress need and desire the kind, sincere, genuine human touch above and beyond everything else. Parker's beautiful words, "Oh, thou great friend to all the sons of men," contains the explanation of Jesus' undimmed splendor. He made good his words. The words of the Christian church have not been lacking. The church is now called upon to make good. If anything is clear, it is this call in the voice of our time.

Here is suggested one simple, effective way. If there are fifty thousand autos in any State, and one-tenth of them could be won to this service, five thousand sorrowful would be made glad, five thousand lonely and friendless quickened by the word and touch of new friendships, five thousand weak made strong,—and this every week for not less, let us say, than six months in the year. What the result would be for those who were served I have tried to indicate. What blessed gift of the

Spirit might descend upon those who did the service, no man can tell.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHILDREN

BY EMELINE HARRINGTON

Whatever else the church may do or leave undone, it cannot with safety neglect the religious training of children. Its future as an organization depends upon them. The unchurched masses are untrained in our ways of thought and action, even if they were thronging our doors, seeking admission to our fellowship. Converts from other denominations are not likely to largely increase our numbers, while the growing liberality of orthodox churches enables their communicants to remain with comfort in the familiar and loved surroundings. It is easier to keep the children in the church than to win them back after we have let them drift away. We cannot expect them to continue our work if we do not teach them to know and care about it. But there is another consideration far more important than the fate of an organization,—it is the life of the individual. Ours is a living faith. We have learned its worth. We must not leave the children to make useless experiments and suffer from unnecessary mistakes. It is their right to receive all the help our experience can furnish. It is our duty to share with them the sure refuge in times of trouble that we have found. It is a glorious privilege to show them the way to unfailing sources of moral and spiritual power. There is no greater service that we can render to the future than to pass on to the children all the good that we have gained. Our religion is our greatest treasure. Let us share it with them, for they will live and need it after we are gone.

THE CHURCH SERVICE

BY DAVID UTTER

The first religions of men were religions of fear. Their rituals were ceremonies to placate the gods, to prevent famine, forestall pestilence, cure disease or bring good luck. Before the great Jewish temple in Jerusalem the smoke of sacrifice of animals ascended daily, and the accompanying prayers were for mercy and forgiveness. This temple service grew out of the religion of fear.

But back in the country towns, Nazareth, Capernaum, and in the colonies, there was growing up a religion of a better sort. It claimed not to originate in any divine revelation: it had neither priesthood nor sacrifice; it dealt with no mysteries, promised no forgiveness of sins, and pretended nothing miraculous. Its assemblages were for instruction in the law of God—schools rather than churches we would call those Sabbath day meetings, and they were called synagogues, congregations, simply. They were designed for human improvement rather than to seek divine favor—and they were destined to outlive the gorgeous temple service of the Jews, and the temple service of every other nation. In the synagogue was born the school idea of salvation of men, in contrast to the sacramental idea.

To the unthoughtful it might seem a foolish and vain contrivance for helping mankind, for companies of people simply to assemble and pray and sing together once a week and listen to some discourse or exhortation pertaining to moral conduct and spiritual welfare and hope in God for life eternal. But the ages have justified it. Adoption of the method by hundreds of organizations, fraternal, social, political, reformatory, have approved it and demonstrated its efficiency. It means not only the united strength of the com-

pany assembled. There is the quickened zeal, and the increased devotion from association. There is an outreaching influence from the public knowledge that so many people are committed to the cause. There is the force of being committed to a cause; there is the force of habit, there is the cumulative force of oft-repeated truth, there is the influence of early instruction. And above all, there is the satisfaction that lies in the feeling of friendship that can be trusted whatever may befall.

So the first century gave the best model, as I think, for the twentieth century church.

THE PARISH COMMITTEE AND THE MINISTER

BY HILARY BYGRAVE

Of course, the success of a church depends largely upon the efficiency of the Parish Committee. This committee should be composed of the livest and most earnest men and women in the parish. It is no place for a stick of dead timber. Then granted that the minister is worth his salt and knows his business, he, too, should be *ex officio* a member of this committee, and they should meet together for mutual conferences in regard to the affairs and work of the parish, not less than four times a year, or better still, once in two months. At such meetings the minister might make suggestions and advise the trial or adoption of this or some other plan for better or more vigorous parish administration. And on the other hand, the committee, *as a whole,* better than any individual on his own initiative, might be able to indicate to the minister how he might more efficiently serve the interests of the parish, or how he might better vary his pulpit instructions and

not preach merely to please himself. Anyway, I plead for a more hearty co-operation on the part of the Parish Committee and the minister. I know of parish committees that never meet but about once a year, and which never think of taking council with their minister, even though he has some horse sense and a fair amount of business capacity, but I don't think such churches take, or can take, a very high rank for efficiency or success.

The great passion of the present day is evidently the passion for reconstruction. Ancient monarchies are turned into republics, and the old heroes and patriots into demagogues or myths. What used to be reckoned sober history is now presented as a mosaic of mouldy legends or an air castle of bold romance. The immovable earth of ancient thought has been set spinning on its axis about the sun, and the solid firmament in which it used to be thought that the sun, with the other fixed stars, were set, has been dissolved into thin air."—*Rev. James T. Bixby, Ph. D.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S PRAYER

"O powerful Goodness!
"Bountiful Father!
"Merciful Guide!

"Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolutions to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me."

A REASONABLE FAITH

BY ROBERT C. DOUTHIT

"Faith," wrote the student, "is belief in what can't happen; hope is belief in what won't happen; and charity is belief in what does happen."

Blanco White told of a certain monastery in Spain where there was a golden box with a glass lid, in which was said to be a hair plucked from the head of Christ by a Roman soldier. One day a man came to look at the relic, but after gazing a long time he told the monk that he could not see a hair anywhere in the box.

"I don't wonder at that," the old man replied. "I have not seen it myself these twenty years; but if you have faith that it is there, it will be all the same."

If we are honest with ourselves, we will not accept the authority of tradition, or the word of a million credulous, half-hypnotized observers if we look into the receptacle said to contain a wonderful theological truth and find it empty. What we plead for is not a faith that delights to believe "what can't happen," or a faith that sees what is not there; but a faith that is willing to face the facts squarely, and having carefully scrutinized the evidence in the calm light of reason and experience, bears witness for the truth just as it appears, and not as someone else says that it ought to appear.

MOTTO FROM ADDISON'S CATO

"Here will I hold. If there's a power above us
(And that there is all nature cries aloud
Thro' all her works), He must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be happy."

DOES THIS INTEREST YOU?

There are thousands of people who know they are Unitarians, but who, because there are no Unitarian churches near at hand, are not members and do not take the part they would like to take in the propagation of liberal religious ideas.

There are other thousands who are Unitarians and do not know it until they read the literature which we are distributing, free of cost, in all parts of this and other countries.

From both of these classes of Unitarians we are constantly receiving letters asking if there is not some way in which they can register themselves as Unitarians and share in the good work we are doing. This fact has prompted us to establish the rapidly growing roll of

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in the American Unitarian Association. We invite you to become such a member. In return for one dollar and your signature upon a card, which we will send you upon application, you will receive each month a copy of Unitarian Word and Work and each new pamphlet or tract which is published by the Association. Your name will be placed in our card catalogue and we shall be glad to render you any service in our power. Moreover, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are co-operating with a religious body whose teachings are in harmony with modern, rather than mediæval, knowledge.

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If this interests you, drop a line to the address below and receive the card of application.

ASSOCIATE DEPARTMENT,
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON.

NOTES

There is to be a series of State Conferences in the Middle West. The schedule as now planned is as follows:

Michigan Conference, at Detroit, Oct. 4 and 5.

Illinois Conference, at Geneseo, Oct. 5, 6 and 7.

Minnesota Conference, at St. Paul, Oct. 11 and 12.

Iowa Conference, at Davenport, Oct. 13 and 14.

Missouri Valley Conference, at Wichita, Kan., Oct. 18 and 19.

All associate members of the American Unitarian Association and all others interested in the propagation of liberal religious thought and life are cordially invited to attend these conferences. It is possible that those living near where these conferences are to be held will find it convenient to attend, and, if they make their presence known, are sure to receive a hearty welcome.

The Ministers' Institute is an organization to which all the ministers of our fellowship are cordially invited, and it meets biennially, alternating with the National Conference. This year the meetings will be from Sept. 26 to 29, at Marblehead, Mass. Should anyone desire further particulars he can secure them by addressing Rev. Charles T. Billings, Lowell, Mass.

Rev. Lewis G. Wilson, Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, will leave Boston about the first of October, to visit all the State conferences of the Middle West. He will then probably proceed to the Rocky Mountain district, returning the latter part of October or the first of November.

The great International Congress, which has been held this Summer in the city of Berlin, Germany, has been largely attended by delegates from all over the world. The Secretary of Foreign Relations of the American Unitarian Association, Rev. Charles W. Wendte, D. D., has sent many glowing accounts of the enthusiasm which has resulted. As one of the results of this meeting, which has inspired the interest and co-operation of many of the leading scholars of Germany, we note the forceful antagonism of orthodox papers in Europe and warnings from orthodox pulpits against the influences which are thus initiated. Still, the earth revolves around the sun and the progress toward larger freedom of religious thought and a wiser interpretation of human life continues, and will continue in spite of human protests.

Let all ministers and others who are interested in the welfare of local churches, lay centres and other religious movements, consider seriously whether they cannot to advantage make use of this CALENDAR.

The UNITARIAN CALENDAR is published monthly, except July and August, by the American Unitarian Association, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Single subscription, 25 cents a year. Club rate, five for $1.00.

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